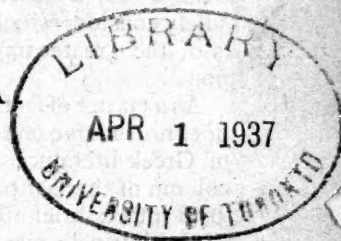


THE
EQUALITY OF GREEK
WITH
FRENCH AND GERMAN.
(A R E P L Y .)

BY
W. H. FRASER, B.A.
University of Toronto.



I N the nineteenth chapter of the Book of Acts we read of a certain Ephesian Demetrius, whose craft was endangered by the increasing influence of the true Gospel, and who cried out with his followers for about the space of two hours, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." In recent numbers of the *Canada Educational Monthly* Professor Hutton and others of his fellow craftsmen have with like vigour and reason attempted to stay the progress of more enlightened educational methods, and have uttered a prolonged and plaintive Ephesian cry over the waning power and influence of Greek. Now that the uproar has subsided, I shall try to discover and discuss whatever has accompanied it in the shape of argument or alleged fact. I am sorry that I cannot consider the article in question in chronological order. Its writer has, I fear, so sacrificed logical sequence to rhetoric, and clearness to the beauties of

style, that he will, I hope, pardon me if, in the interests of my readers and in the hope of being intelligible, I take the liberty of making my own re-classification of the contents of the articles and of presenting the matter under the following heads:—

1. The intrinsic, academic, and educational superiority of Greek.

The reader will please note here, at the outset, that this is not one of the topics which Professor Hutton proposed to discuss in his article. Ostensibly, he proposed to narrow the discussion down to the question of whether pass Greek in the curriculum of the University of Toronto is more or less difficult than the French and German, and by how much. In clearing his ground he says, for example: "When it is said, therefore, that Greek is equal to French with German, nothing whatever is said or assumed regarding the intrinsic superiority of Greek literature to either

French or German literature, still less regarding the intrinsic superiority in university standing of the teacher of Greek to the teacher of French or of German . . . nothing is said or necessarily assumed regarding the inferiority, even from the mere educational point of view of either French or German to Greek." The rhetorical device is an ingenious and elegant one, as if one should say: "I shall not speak on this occasion of John Smith's mental inferiority to that of Thomas Jones, I shall be equally silent of his inferior academic standing, I shall not even allude to his defects as a teacher, but I shall solely consider which of the two men is of the greater importance avoirdupois."

As a matter of fact Professor Hutton does not enlarge on the intrinsic merits of Greek literature. Only in the last column of the last page does he break forth into a brief dithyrambic eulogy of the intrinsic merits of Greek, and vigorously protests his belief that when "the growth of wealth shall have slowly built up a class possessing hereditary leisure and hereditary refinement the number of students will be greater instead of less than it is to-day." "There is nothing in the world that moves which is not of Greek origin," says Sir Henry Maine, and, "Out of a Greek (Plato) come all things that are still written and debated among men of thought," says Emerson. Does Professor Hutton intend us to take the above quotations literally, and as forming the basis of an educational theory? As rhetoric, I admit that they are very pretty; they express in an elegant and forcible way an extreme admiration for what is Greek. Taken literally and as seriously defining an educational theory, they make the study of Greek a genuine fetich-worship, and they are characteristic of a type of educational philistinism which regards

all studies but one with narrow and unreasoning contempt. But these exaggerated claims are so far alien to the question in hand that they need not be further discussed here.

Regarding the superiority in university standing of the teacher of Greek he is liberal, even condescending. "So far as persons are concerned" there should be equality, he says, but, as I understand him, the inequality incidental to the inherent and intrinsic superiority of Greek is one of those things which being incurable must be endured. He assures us that he had occasion some years ago to prove the sincerity of his convictions with regard to this equality of persons. What the occasion referred to is, I am at a loss to conjecture, and I am sure many of my readers are in like uncertainty.

Although nothing was to have been said of the inferiority of French and German from an educational point of view, the writer, doubtless led away by his zeal, devotes a large portion of his article to the discussion of this topic. Now, speaking generally, what is meant precisely by the "educational value" of this or that branch of learning? For example, Greek may be said to have an "intrinsic" value, an "educational value," a "commercial value," and, moreover, a "utilitarian value," and, perhaps, a "social value," etc. My own impression for a long time has been that this much-abused term "educational value" is largely a figment or a word for pedants to conjure with. All kinds of real knowledge accurately acquired have surely some educational value, and, to my mind, it is mere pedantry and futility to attempt to determine with a pair of apothecary's scales, or in per cents., what is the relation of the educational value of Greek to that of Latin, French, chemistry, etc., or the relation of the educational value of Greek to its

various other values. Many educators hold, for example, that the educational value of one language *mastered* is about the same with that of any other language mastered. Greek is difficult nay, (by Professor Hutton's own showing) impossible of mastery. What then shall be said of the educational value of an unaccomplished and impossible task? Admitting that the Greek language when mastered, or approximately mastered, is of very great educational value, are we to swallow the fallacy that, on this account, Greek possesses this peculiar and special virtue in the case of the pass-man, who may or who may not have acquired the mere capacity of turning Greek into English with the help of Grammar, vocabularies and "crib," and who has written through an elementary exercise book? I cannot refrain from referring to one of the arguments advanced in what I might call Professor Hutton's panegyric on the educational value of the verb paradigms (p. 42), as it demonstrates so extremely well the ultimate results of the "educational value" theory. Had our undergraduates been born Greeks or Romans, says he, the "cruces" of the Latin subjunctive or Greek optative "would have been imbibed with their mother's milk, and the educational training thereof would have been lost to them." Alas, poor Homer and Plato! unfortunates, ye imbibed the optative in the primitive fashion referred to, and ye lost irreparably the "educational training thereof," and yet ye have left names that will survive the fame of all the other unfortunates who did enjoy the "educational training thereof," and who imbibed the optative with tears and the sap of the birchen tree at Rugby, or who absorbed it from the "crib" at Oxford.

We find out more clearly elsewhere wherein the educational superiority

of Greek consists. It is more difficult for an Englishman than Latin, and much more so than French or German, *ergo* it has a higher educational value. It is quite clear (*vide* panegyric on the Greek verbs, p. 42) that Professor Hutton's gauge of the difficulty of a language is mainly the complexity of its inflexional system and the dissimilarity of its vocabulary to that of English, and to be able to recite and construe *τύπτω* is in itself a liberal education. But Sanskrit is on the whole considerably more complex in its inflexional system than Greek, and its vocabulary is still more unlike that of English. Why do we not then avail ourselves of the superior educational value of this language in order to train up in our midst a race of intellectual giants? There is another view of language study which does not seem to have seriously occurred to Professor Hutton, at least so far as his Greek pass-man is concerned, viz., that language is a medium for the expression of thought, and that there is enough difference between any two languages (even the most similar) to make it extremely difficult for the student ever to acquire the power of expressing his thought with perfect accuracy in a foreign tongue. To acquire this power is the aim of the true student of modern languages, and I hold that the task is one arduous enough to tax and develop the mental powers of even the strongest. If this view of linguistic study were more common, and if it were borne out more fully in educational methods, we should hear less of the special educational value of this or that language.

The opinion expressed in Professor Hoffman's celebrated address of 1880 (quoted p. 43), in which opinion some thirty-six Berlin professors concurred, "would be valuable evidence as to the superiority of Greek in general and incidentally to the value of

pass Greek in the University of Toronto, except that the evidence is vitiated by two unfortunate circumstances: (1) The constitution of the jury which pronounced the verdict referred to. Every one of the thirty-six professors in question had been trained in the classical gymnasium of the most conservative type, Latin and Greek being the staple of their education. Imagine for a moment a perfectly parallel case. Suppose a commission consisting of Professor Hutton and thirty-five other professors of similar training and predilections appointed to pronounce on the value of classics (especially Greek). I need not say what the decision would be. (2) The dissimilarity between Greek in Germany and Greek here. My readers must not suppose that the Greek training of the German gymnasium is a parallel case to the Greek training of the Toronto pass-men. A comparison between the two would be odious.

Professor Hutton says further, "it is noteworthy that the assertion itself of such a general superiority in the classical students is not disputed in Germany." But even in Germany, where old beliefs and prejudices die hard, all is not serene just now on the classical horizon. The pretensions of classics to form the basis as well as the apex of national higher education are not unchallenged. As the *Quarterly Review*, in a late article, says of the Greek question in England, "The *Zeitgeist* is walking again," and this time he has used the German Emperor to affirm in strong terms that the monastic Latin and Greek education of the middle ages will no longer suffice in Germany. He says in a recent speech (December last) before the German commission on reform in secondary education: "Wer selber auf dem Gymnasium gewesen ist und hinter die Coullissen gesehen hat, der weisz, wo es da fehlt . . . Wir

müssen von der Basis abgehen, die Jahrhunderte bestanden hat, von der alten klösterlichen Erziehung des Mittelalters wo das Lateinisch masgebend war und ein bischen Griechisch dazu." I commend special attention to the high sense of the educational value of Greek which is expressed in the phrase, ein bischen Griechisch dazu."

What manifestations have we had in Ontario of this peculiar educational value of Greek, especially of pass Greek? And yet there has been every occasion for such manifestations. Until 1885, the University of Toronto demanded four years of Greek from every pass-man. The country round about should be swarming with intellectual athletes. Statistics regarding the more eminent of those who exemplify the educational magic of pass Greek, here in Ontario, would be more relevant to Professor Hutton's argument and much more convincing than the fact that, some ten years ago, certain eminent Berlin Professors reaffirmed a certain set of educational theories and prejudices which they had acquired and assimilated much after the same fashion as we are told the infant Greek used to imbibe the "cruces" of the optative.

Professor Hutton would have us believe (p. 44) that "a strong *prima facie* case is made out in favour of classics" in an article of the *London Spectator* (27th December). As a matter of fact the article in question and the discussion which occasioned it are the strongest sort of support to the very position which modern language men in Ontario hold. In the Conference of Head Masters of the English public schools (Rugby, Eton, etc.), held 23rd December last, the head master of Harrow proposed the following resolution, which was lost on a vote of thirty-one to twenty-nine: "That, in the opinion of this Conference, it would be a gain to education

if Greek were not a compulsory subject in the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge." The question here is simply that of pass Greek. It is a striking circumstance, and one not likely to afford much comfort to those who extol the educational value of pass Greek in Toronto, that at a conference of masters, all of whom are Greek scholars, the vote was almost a tie. The *Spectator's* article on the vote praises in high terms a thorough study of Greek, but if Professor Hutton and the friends of pass Greek can extract any sunshine out of the following remarks of the *Spectator*, I think they are unduly hopeful: "We are convinced," says the *Spectator*, "that the sooner it is admitted (as we at least do admit) that all those who would profit greatly by University education, ought not to be required to learn Greek, and will not really learn it even if they are required, the sooner will the irrational and retrogressive depreciation of the study of Greek as one all-important branch of literary study die a natural death. The idea of a liberal and progressive policy could never by any possibility have been connected with the discouragement of Greek learning, if it had not been for the exaggerated claims put forward, and put forward in vain, on behalf of Greek, by scholars who have only succeeded thereby in driving away a great number of learners from the Universities altogether, to their great loss, and in persuading a few to waste their time on acquiring a merely nominal acquaintance with Greek that never results in any real intellectual gain." The whole controversy, I may explain, is about a matter which was decided some six years ago in the University of Toronto by making Greek optional for pass-men, and which will doubtless be decided in the same way for Oxford and Cambridge before the end of the next six years.

Moreover Greek is said to be of great importance because, as is implied, the study of it is the surest guide to literary "style." Professor Hutton says, "Why is it that English is best written and spoken where it is least taught, in England?" The answer in brief is, that "no English lecturer or lecturer (*sic*) can produce any but the most meagre results"; but the fact is to be accounted for, (1) "by the atmosphere of literature in which whole classes move, . . . (2) by all the other cognate advantages incident to leisure and wealth and an old established civilization and (3) by the influence of the classical languages."

It seems a pity that an argument brought so far should have to be labeled as an example of *non sequitur*, yet such it is. Observe that there are several factors involved—literary atmosphere, wealth, leisure, etc., the study of Latin, and, lastly, the study of Greek. He might also have added climatic peculiarities and the influence of the Gulf Stream. Will Professor Hutton determine for us which of these factors is the strongest, or will he assert that, if the factor French or German were substituted for Greek in the problem, literary style would suffer? The argument is too slender to bear examination. But, says he, were not Tennyson, Browning, Arnold, Swinburne, Huxley, all of them acknowledged masters of style, trained in classics? Granted, but *non sequitur* again. The whole matter is really this: The educational circumstances of their age happened to give these men a classical education. They were men of genius and soared high, and would have done so under any other system of education, just as Homer and Sophocles did, though they knew no tongue but their own, and just as Dante and Shakespeare

did although neither of them knew even pass Greek. The manifestations of genius are evidently independent of pass Greek. I admit, nay I hold, that any study of language will tend to improve one's English style, but I have yet to be convinced that Greek has any special virtue in this regard. I deny that the study of Greek infallibly leads to excellence or perfection of English style, nor shall I need to go far afield to substantiate my contention.

Before leaving this branch of the subject I should like to inquire what is meant by referring to English and other modern languages as "slipshod." Does it mean that English, for example, will not serve to express accurately any thoughts which an Englishman may think? or is this just one of those vague insinuations which convey, especially to the *vulgus*, an overpowering sense of the erudition of the individual whose vast linguistic lore enables him to allude so slightly to his own language and on the other hand to imply that if he, at least, is to think or speak with anything like precision it must be in an ancient foreign tongue. I confess I do not like this depreciation of the capacities of our own language, and I am tempted to commend to depreciators in general a certain homely anecdote. It is related of Horace Greeley that one of his sub-editors was fond of interlarding his articles with quotations from various foreign sources. Greeley summoned the subordinate before him one day and advised him to discontinue the practice, adding sententiously: "Young man, it is my opinion that the English language will serve amply to express any thoughts that you have now or are likely to have for some years to come."

Hitherto my reply to Professor Hutton has been devoted to the discussion of matters which he proposed not to

discuss, but which were, in fact, referred to by him at considerable length in the article in question. Paradoxical as it may seem, my reply will now be chiefly devoted to the discussion of matters which he proposed to discuss in his article, while failing to do so.

2. The curriculum of the University of Toronto and the comparative difficulty of Greek, French, German.

A statement of the scope and object of the Greek, French, and German courses respectively, laid down in the curriculum would seem to be an essential preliminary to any discussion under this head. Instead of giving us this indispensable definition of the question, Professor Hutton has asserted that a certain undefined quantity called Greek is much greater than either of two other equally undefined quantities, called French and German, and, without more ado, he has hastened triumphantly, though illogically, to the conclusion that pass Greek is or should be equal to pass French plus pass German in the University of Toronto. In order that the discussion may proceed intelligibly, I hasten to supply his omission.

The curriculum of 1890-95 shows that the scope of the pass Greek course of four years is, (a) the translation into English of certain texts, (b) sight translation of easy Greek (with the help of vocabularies), (c) Greek prose involving a knowledge of Abbott's Arnold's Exercise Book (or its equivalent).

The scope of the pass French course is, (a) translation of certain texts into English, (b) sight translation of modern French (without vocabularies), (c) translation of English into French, (d) composition in French, (e) dictation, (f) outlines of history of literature. The German course is parallel, but omits original composition. Grammar is required in both, as also in Greek.

To give my readers a still clearer

idea of what Professor Hutton's equation of Greek = French + German means in the curriculum, I shall put down the fourth year work by way of example :—

(a) In *Greek*: Texts, Meno, Ion; grammar; easy sight translation (with vocabularies); English into Greek prose (as in Abbott's Arnold's or its equivalent).

(b) In *French*: Texts, Zaïre, Le Barbier de Séville, Atala, Émaux et Camées, Hernani, Eugénie Grandet; grammar; composition in French; dictation; translation of English into French; sight modern French (without vocabularies); history of literature of the 18th and 19th centuries.

(c) In *German*: Texts, Wallenstein, Heine's Prosa (selections), Wildenbruch's Neue Novellen, Faust, pt. I.; grammar; translation of English into German; sight modern German into English (without vocabularies); history of literature prior to 18th century.

Expressed in the terms of the equation and apart from generalities and ecstasies on the merits of Greek in the abstract, this means that it is as easy for the student to reach the pass standard (33 per cent.) in (b) and (c) together as to obtain the same per cent. of (a). I leave this astounding statement in the meantime in order to examine the supposed evidence upon which the equation is based. It consists substantially of the following items: (1) Professor Hutton's *ipse dixit*. This item admits of no discussion. (2) The following statement drawn from Professor Hutton's own experience. He says, "I have myself little French and less German, measured by the hours I have given to these languages; yet I still find even now that I can translate French at sight with considerable (*sic*) more ease than Latin." This experience is confirmed, we are told, by that of Mr. Dale and Professor Campbell. Appealing again to his own experi-

ence, Professor Hutton says of German, "After devoting to it not one-hundredth, nor, I think, one thousandth part of the time given to classics, I find not unnaturally that Latin is easier now to me, and, on the whole, Greek also; though if I should open at random a book of Greek and German poems, there would be, I believe, a fairly large minority of cases in which I should catch the idea of the German more quickly than of the Greek." This is all very marvellous and interesting, but what does it prove? It might seem to prove at first sight that, as Mascarille says in *Les Précieuses*, "Les gens de qualité savent tout sans avoir jamais rien appris." Or, if we may allow the statement of fact to go unchallenged, may it not merely prove that these gentlemen, after many years of linguistic preparation and development in Latin and Greek have acquired without much labour what is after all even by their own showing a very humble acquaintance with French? The strongest part of this evidence is Professor Hutton's marvellous acquaintance with German. He has devoted infinitesimal time to it and yet, wonderful to relate, he can translate it with more ease than Greek in many cases. (By the way I hope he does his Greek no injustice.) Granting all that he claims, it is still most irrelevant to the question. These gentlemen are not pass-men, and besides, even if they were pass-men and possessed this *translating* knowledge and nothing more, they would still be regularly plucked at the annual examinations, for no pass-man in French and German at the University gets through on mere translation. It is the smaller part of what is required of him. Will Professor Hutton appeal with the same confidence to his own knowledge of what are made the real tests in pass French and German, viz., composition, translation of English into

French and dictation? It is hardly likely that he will do so. Even if he will and can, the argument is none the less irrelevant. I fear that this discussion must prove largely fruitless until the friends of pass Greek try to realize the vast difference which exists between their definition of proficiency in a language and the one upon which modern language men insist. We are talking about power to use a language to express thought: they are talking about power to translate it into English, with helps. (3) Professor Fletcher opines that one can become more proficient in French and German in a given time than in Greek alone. Presupposing the methods at present in vogue in each respectively, this is precisely my own belief, but that proves nothing with regard to the relative difficulty of passing the tests prescribed by the curriculum, which is the question we are discussing. Besides it shows incidentally that the pass-man in French and German is much more likely to have some permanent knowledge at the end of his course, while the Greek man is extremely likely to have nothing for his labour (and no one would admit this more readily than Professor Hutton under ordinary circumstances). (4) Mr. Cody's summing up needs only to be stated in order that it may condemn itself. He says, "the pass French course simply cannot be made hard . . . it is a mere matter of time to accomplish it." I might remind him, however, that whatever fine distinctions may exist in his own mind between "time" and "hardness," yet there are only twenty-four hours in the pass-man's day, and, as he will presently see, the want of a longer day seems to prove uncommonly fatal to success in pass French and German. The number of witnesses called by Professor Hutton for the prosecution is surprisingly small, and, as I have shown, the testimony

does not touch the question except in the vaguest way. Some of the more prominent classical scholars in Ontario, and among them those who are at the same time ripe scholars in modern languages, are conspicuously and ominously absent. (5) There is still a further argument which for *naïveté* deserves to be placed by itself. "Would it not be easy," says Professor Hutton, "to construct whole sentences of intelligible rational French, which could be translated by an intelligent, well-read Englishman, whose knowledge of French was acquired in a dozen lessons; *simply owing to the very large number of words common (except for a letter of two) to the two languages?*" (Italics mine.) My fellow-teachers of modern languages will recognize in this an extreme re-statement of that venerable and vulgar error, common to the elementary pupil in French, which it is our first business and care as teachers to eradicate. To find it used here as an argument makes one fear greatly for the alleged knowledge of the person who advances it.

Since the discussion is based on the revision of the curriculum for 1890-95, I must in the next place explain what that document prescribes as to the relation of French and German to Greek. The pass-man is told in effect with reference to his foreign languages: "You must take Latin and any two of the following three: Greek, French, German." Hence this curriculum says, "Greek is equal to French *or* German." Now what could have induced the Senate to make a prescription of this kind? The Senate, when it framed the above clause, was probably not aware of the appalling politico-metaphysical complexity of its own motive in so doing. Here is the motive in all its horror, as given by Professor Hutton (p. 45): "The demand (for equality) then, is partly a confusion of thought intro-

duced from the sphere of politics, and arising from a two-fold confusion, partly between the intrinsic and educational value of the subject taught and the dignity of the teacher teaching it." (I do not profess to understand this fully, and must leave my readers to wrestle with it.) For my part, however, I feel disposed to favour the alternative explanation which Professor Hutton thinks may possibly account for the demand for equality, viz., that the Senate actually thought that it would take as much labour on the part of the student to obtain thirty-three per cent. of either the prescribed French or the German course, as of the Greek. A glance at the requirements of the curriculum ought to convince any one that the inherent probability that this actually is the case is very great. Such a glance will also exhibit incidentally the difference between classical and modern language ideals with respect to language study. The main object of the pass Greek course is to enable the student to turn prescribed Greek texts into English with grammar and dictionary—the so-called "working knowledge" of Greek. Now, it is undeniable that the translating of the few texts prescribed may be done, and commonly is done, with the help of "cribs," and thus degenerates into a mere process of memory, combined with the mechanical matching of the words in the "crib" with those in the text. It is also a fact that it has heretofore been possible to pass in Greek on translation alone. Observe too that the easy sight Greek is rendered a farce by the help of vocabularies. The above, with the grammar, has been heretofore the sum and substance, the beginning and the ending of pass Greek in the University. In 1890, however, an elementary prose exercise-book was added—an important change, and, as I take it, a concession to modern language meth-

ods. But as this little book is spread over four years, it can hardly be a very serious addition to the labours of the student, especially as it forms, I understand, but one year's work for boys in the higher forms of our collegiate institutes.

As to the nature of the tests imposed in them, the courses in French and German really begin where the course in Greek leaves off. Texts are assigned, to be sure, but they are not the *pièce de résistance* at examination as in Greek. In French, for example, in addition to grammar, the candidate must read at sight any modern French (without vocabularies); he must also be able to use the language both to express his own thought in original composition and to translate any kind of English into French; further, he must understand the language when it is read to him. Not only are these tests vastly higher in their scope than those imposed in Greek, but more useful to the student, for, as every real teacher of language knows, even the paltry accomplishment of turning either Greek or French into English will not be permanent if the learner has not got beyond the mere grammar and dictionary stage at which the teaching of pass Greek practically stops.

If Professor Hutton's equation of Greek = French + German is right, and the 1890-95 curriculum wrong, we should expect to find that the work of preparing the students for examination is much greater in pass Greek than in either French or German. Hence, we should expect to find that the number of lectures to pass Greek men in University College is equal to that given in French and German together. Now what are the facts? The sum total of pass lectures in Greek in all four years is *five*; in French and German together it is *eighteen*. It must be noted too that the Greek

department is fully equipped as to teaching power, and hence it is to be presumed that all the lectures necessary are given. French and German are but poorly equipped, and more lectures are needed but cannot be given. If Greek requires as much labour as French and German put together, by what sort of pedagogical magic do the instructors in that branch crowd into five lectures the work for which eighteen are admittedly insufficient in French and German. As to the nature of this mysterious process I refer my readers to the opinions of Messrs. Fairclough and Robertson (pp. 13 and 14 below).

Moreover, if Professor Hutton's equation is right and the curriculum wrong, we should expect to find the percentage of failures greater in pass Greek than in French or German. Here, too, the facts are against his equation and in favour of the curriculum. At the last annual examination, 1890, the failures in pass classics were: first year, 53 out of 173; second year, 36 out of 112. In French, first year, 35 out of 79; second year, 41 out of 77. German, first year, 20 out of 79. Previous records perished in the fire last year, but would tell a similar story.

A consideration of the actual demands of the curriculum and of the above facts and figures ought to have led Professor Hutton to suspect that there was something wrong with his supposed equation and that the curriculum was right after all in putting these subjects on a footing of equality. But, judging from his article, it appears very doubtful whether he considered either the curriculum or the facts, for, inspired by his belief in the importance of his translating power in French and German, picked up at odd moments, he waxes still more enthusiastic and declares that pass French or pass German can only be made an equivalent to pass Greek on

the curriculum by resorting to certain extraordinary and ingenious expedients, for some of which, as far as I know, he may fairly claim patent right, to wit: the addition of "history, archæology . . . strings of authors to be referred to and books to be read . . . the higher criticism." Having set up these very gruesome looking men of straw, he proceeds to knock them down one after another in the following style: He says of philology, for example, "from the educational side philology has no practical value . . . it may be confidently recommended to elderly gentlemen with a little money, no occupation, virtuous habits, a sanguine temperament and a judgment not too exact or exacting in the measurement of evidence." I confess I thought at first sight that this description of a philologist was intended for a joke, or was meant for a philanthropist of the Pickwickian type, but as there is but one professor of philology in Ontario, and as Professor Hutton is particularly well acquainted with him, we must, I suppose, accept the description as authentic, only lamenting the fact that one who fills the philologist's chair should express such contempt for the science he is paid to teach. But to return, who has ever proposed to make the pass French or German course difficult by this method? As a member of Senate, Professor Hutton must know that after years of effort honour modern languages have only just succeeded in getting rid of such extraneous matter as honour History and Ethnology, and that the courses now (both pass and honour) demand almost nothing beyond a knowledge of the language itself. To come to facts, I ask him to point out to the educational public which of the requirements of either the pass or honour courses in French and German he objects to on pedagogical principles. He will look in vain for

"history, archæology," or any of the other foolish expedients which he suggests; and moreover, if he attempts to re-impose what has been discarded after a long struggle as useless he will meet with the opposition of modern language men at least.

As an illustration of the fact that it is possible to make a French or a German course equal to one in Greek without the above devices, I would refer Professor Hutton to the practice in Harvard University. If it is possible to establish such an equality there it is possible here. At Harvard, as "advanced subjects" (part of the matriculation test), Latin, Greek, French, German are on a footing of perfect equality. I quote here an explanatory remark from a speech by President Eliot. He says: "We require for admission to Harvard College, besides a knowledge of certain elementary subjects, the passing of examinations in at least two advanced subjects. Now the advanced subjects used to be . . . only Latin, Greek, Mathematics, but in 1887 we put French and German on a perfect equality." Comment is needless. I will only add that many years ago a pass-man in the University of Toronto also was allowed in the third and fourth year an option between Latin and Greek on the one hand, and French and German on the other, and that without the extraneous matter aforesaid.

The friends of pass Greek appear to have thought that the 1890-95 curriculum struck a terrible blow at Greek. Professor Hutton alludes to the "abstract injustice and practical mischief" of the changes made. He says again, "the last curriculum (1885-90) made their yoke easy, and the new curriculum has diminished their yoke." Mr. Cody, too, owing to an ignorance of the curriculum, which is perhaps pardonable in a gentleman of his inexperience, is quite

sure that certain very baneful effects are directly traceable to the new curriculum. These false impressions, under which doubtless many others labour, are worth correcting. Professor Hutton's whole article indeed was founded on a false impression. He starts out by assuming that the old curriculum (1885-90) said: "pass Greek is equal to pass French and pass German, plus a little more." I observe that he has since then stated in *The Mail* that this was a misconception, as indeed it was, and a very gross one. If he had read the 1885-90 curriculum beforehand, or better still, if he had understood it, all this expenditure of printer's ink might have been spared. Now, what did the 1885-90 curriculum really say? It said in effect, though the wording was somewhat obscure: "Pass-men must take, in the first and second years, any two of the three languages (Greek, French, German), and in the third and fourth years, Greek *or* French + German." The new curriculum said in effect: "Pass-men must take in all four years any *two* of the three (Greek, French, German)." With this statement of the facts before us, what becomes of the supposed ill effects upon Greek in the schools? A high school boy asking in 1885-90, "Can I get my B.A. degree with Latin, French and German and without Greek?" is answered by the curriculum, "Yes." Precisely the same answer is given to precisely the same question by the curriculum of 1890-95. The new curriculum did little else than re-state the requirements in other words, but in words which deprived pass Greek of its certificate to a superiority which does not actually exist. The loss of this certificate is, I fancy, the chief grievance of the champions of pass Greek. Surely they will not argue now that a boy in the schools will be turned away from Greek to French and Ger-

man, when it is seen that both new curriculum and old permit him to take French and German all through instead of Greek, and that both new curriculum and old tell him he must take either French *or* German in the first and second year whether he takes Greek or not.

Since the discussion began the aspect of the question has been completely changed and complicated by the action of the Senate last month. A statute, introduced by Professor Hutton, was then passed, by which, in all four years of the course, pass Greek is made equal to French plus German. If my readers will turn back to p. 7 they will see what a preposterous equivalence this is for the fourth year. It is equally so in the lower years. As the curriculum stands at the present moment, taking the whole four years, we get contrasts like the following: 565 pp. of Greek texts = 4,170 pp. French and German texts; Abbott's Arnold's Exercise Book = Original French Composition + the translating of English to French + the translation of English to German; easy sight Greek (with vocabularies) = translation of any modern French + translation of any modern German. The power to understand French and German, when read, and the outlines of the history of literature are not balanced by anything in Greek, even in name. But nothing, I think, makes the pretended equivalence quite so absurd as the contrast in lectures already referred to—five in pass Greek, eighteen in pass French and German.

These contrasts, absurd as they may seem, are perhaps not the worst feature of the present situation. Since at least the year 1857, and continuously up to the present time, the curriculum has said that no pass man should get the degree of B.A. without at least two years study of a modern language, whether taking Greek or

not. For a considerable period not merely two but four years' study of a modern language was demanded. This principle was at that early date deliberately laid down. The reasons for doing so, given in a convocation speech by Rev. Dr. McCaul, then President, part of which I quote, are as sound to-day as they then were, and one can only wonder at the breadth of view and progressiveness of those earlier times in such painful contrast with the counsels which now prevail. He says: "The objection limits itself to the Modern Languages and the Natural Sciences. Now, in the first place, I would state that we have added only those subjects which, within the last few years, have made the greatest progress and the utility of which has been so universally recognized that they are essential elements of a good education (applause). Is it desirable that we should send forth our graduates without any knowledge of those modern languages, which are now so important?" (Professor Hutton and the Senate say now that we should do so.) "There is no scholar who omitted to acquaint himself with the modern languages, but who has had cause for deep regret. What scholar, for example, ignorant of the German, in which the very highest thoughts within the range of human intellect are to be found, but has suffered from the loss?" and more in the same strain. This principle, so wisely laid down, has been adhered to continuously for upwards of thirty-five years. But the Senate, by its recent action under Professor Hutton's direction, reverses all this and turns the hands back on the dial so that they now point to the year of grace 1857 or earlier. Inside the Senate and outside of it, the educational public has been deploring for years the disgracefully low pass standard, and yet the Senate has now further reduced that standard. On this ground alone,

it is impossible to see how that body can maintain the position it has taken. The only reasonable explanation of its extraordinary action is one hardly creditable to it, viz., that it did not inquire into or understand the force of the statute in question before voting on it. This explanation is but a sorry one at best, but friends of education will, I hope, more readily believe that the Senate has made a blunder than that it has deliberately determined to repudiate its own record and to materially lower its pass standard.

There are also other serious complications. The French and German courses were increased in 1890, when each of these subjects was made equal to Greek, in order to avoid all possible cause of complaint. These courses still stand unrevised. By the *volte-face* of last month each of them has only half the value as compared with Greek which it had when the curriculum was framed. The Senate declares in 1891 that its conclusions of 1890 were wrong by 50 per cent., a very serious admission for a body which might be expected to have some regard for its own reputation. Moreover, students of Orientals, who by the 1890 curriculum were allowed to combine Greek and Hebrew, now find themselves in the unfortunate position of being obliged to take Hebrew, if at all, as an extra subject for which they get no credit. In fact the whole situation is so indefensible from every point of view that the Senate cannot possibly leave the curriculum in its present condition. An early re-revision may be looked for.

3. The present position and prospects of Greek.

Professor Hutton in his article admits (p. 87) that the numbers in pass Greek in the University have fallen off some fifty per cent. in ten years, and for this unfortunate condition of affairs he blames the

option which has existed now for some years between Greek, French and German. Pass Greek is evidently in evil case, *in extremis* as it were, but the curriculum is not to blame, at least so think some of the more enlightened classical men, as I shall presently show. If pass Greek is to be saved, its friends had better inquire into the nature of its malady rather than occupy themselves in forcing from the Senate by surprise or strategy a certificate of health and vigour which do not exist. At any rate dissolution will not be delayed for long by a malicious attempt to cripple a vigorous but inoffensive neighbour. No adjustment of the curriculum can avail to save a subject which after three years of preparation (see p. 46) and four years in college leaves the student such meagre permanent results. As to suggestions for saving the life of the unfortunate moribund, I shall not offer my own advice, but I commend to the thoughtful consideration of Professor Hutton and the other friends of pass Greek the following brief quotations from recent articles in this magazine on this very theme, from two of the most distinguished and successful classical teachers in Ontario. These quotations indicate more clearly than I should dare to do the nature of the malady and the hope of cure. Mr. Fairclough, Lecturer on Greek, University College, says in Sept., 1890: "Of late years great improvements have been made in our schools and colleges in the position and teaching of modern languages . . . the teachers and professors of French and German have shown such enterprise and enthusiasm, and have made such progress in methods of instruction that their Latin and Greek brethren, who used to turn up their classical noses with scorn at anything Teutonic or Romance, now humbly crave pardon and sue for pedagogical enlight-

enment." He pertinently asks whether one of our students after six or seven long years devoted to Latin and Greek has mastered more than the barest elements, whether he can even translate into English, or whether he can without fear and trembling explain the meaning of a line from Virgil or Horace or Homer. Mr. Fairclough in sorrow is forced to give a negative answer.

Mr. J. C. Robertson, Owen Sound, says in addressing his fellow-teachers in *The Monthly* (Oct., 1890): "As things are going now, even if fortune, to whom, rather than to any efforts of

yours, you owe what influence remains to you, should in the shifting scenes of educational affairs, offer you your former proud position, you could not retain it, so hopelessly antiquated are your methods. What then do I urge? That you put away the many obsolete methods still in vogue, that you come to some agreement about the objects you should have in view and the best means of attaining them, and that you try to bring it about that there be proper examination of what is done: for the way in which the thing is now managed is a perfect farce."
